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Viewing cable 09QUITO391, LEGISLATORS VISIT U.S. FORWARD OPERATING LOCATION

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09QUITO391**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09QUITO391	2009-05-29 12:15	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Quito

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/08/1/1355/cable-209243.html>

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0391/01 1491215
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 291215Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0410
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8158
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4183
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3557
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY LIMA 3214
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4340
RHMFISS/USSOUTHAF DAVIS MONTHAN AFB AZ
RUEAHQA/OSAF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 2281
RUCOWCA/COGARD TISCOM ALEXANDRIA VA
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/DIRJIATF SOUTH J2

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000391

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [MARR](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: LEGISLATORS VISIT U.S. FORWARD OPERATING LOCATION

REF: A. QUITO 389
[1](#)B. HOTR IIR 6 828 0364 09

Classified By: Amba...

id: 209243
date: 5/29/2009 12:15
refid: 09QUITO391
origin: Embassy Quito
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination: 09QUITO389
header:
VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0391/01 1491215
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 291215Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0410
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8158
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4183
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3557
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RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4340
RHMFISS/USOUTHAF DAVIS MONTHAN AFB AZ
RUEAHQA/OSAF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 2281
RUCOWCA/COGARD TISCOM ALEXANDRIA VA
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/DIRJIATF SOUTH J2

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000391

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [MARR](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: LEGISLATORS VISIT U.S. FORWARD OPERATING LOCATION

REF: A. QUITO 389
[1](#)B. HOTR IIR 6 828 0364 09

Classified By: Ambassador Heather Hodges for reason 1.4 (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Five Ecuadorian legislators, determined to dig up dirt against the U.S. Forward Operating Location (FOL) before it closes, visited the city of Manta on May 21-22 to meet with "aggrieved" local citizens. On May 22, the delegation visited the Eloy Alfaro Air Base and FOL. Ecuadorian military officers ably defended the FOL's activities in a lengthy session covered by the press. In a separate USG briefing in the FOL facility, USG personnel asked that requests for information on specific incidents be sent by diplomatic note. (See Ref A for a report on a GOE delegation that visited the FOL one week earlier as part of the turnover planning process.) End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Five of the seven members of the interim Legislative Commission's International Relations sub-commission participated in the Manta visit on May 21-22: sub-commission president Marcos Martinez, vice president Pilar Nunez, Edison Narvaez, and Gabriel Rivera (all four are members of President Correa's Proud and Sovereign Fatherland, or PAIS, movement), plus opposition Patriotic Society Party

member Hector Gomez. Approximately 25 staffers and press accompanied them.

¶3. (C) In an effort to turn up incriminating reports, the legislators ran radio ads inviting those who wanted to file complaints to join meetings in the city of Manta on May 21 with the local fishermen's association and fishermen's widows, sex workers, and other local citizens.

¶4. (C) The next day on the Eloy Alfaro Air Base (where the FOL is located), the legislators grilled Ecuadorian Air Force and Navy officials, who defended the FOL's activities at length in front of TV cameras. The legislators raised questions about the areas overflowed by FOL aircraft, verification that the FOL flights followed the USG-provided monthly plan, whether the planes could fly undeclared operations, and the role of Ecuadorian and Colombian host nation riders. They also asked about the FOL's role in interdiction and sinking of boats and who would determine the Manta airport's future status. The legislators termed the FOL an "affront to national dignity." They criticized the Ecuadorian military for its failure to demand all the information gathered by FOL planes and to carry out an evaluation of FOL activities prior to its closure.

¶5. (C) Air Force Operations Commander Gen. Alonso Espinoza, Air Base commander Col. Mauricio Campuzano, and Navy officers answered all the questions thoroughly. They stressed that radar could track all flights to 1000 km, that visual confirmation could determine that FOL planes were unarmed, and that they were only the implementers of the former government's decisions. They said that information from FOL surveillance flights was not useful until JIATF-S correlated it with other information and that Ecuadorian Navy actions in regard to a specific vessel were aimed at rescuing the passengers from a boat that was inadequate to carry them. The Ecuadorian military officers punted on only two questions: sub-commission president Martinez's inquiry about flights and host nation riders on February 28, 2008, the day before the Colombian attack on a FARC camp in northern Ecuador (they promised to get back to the legislators with the information, and did so that same day), and a question about the quantity of drugs captured (they suggested asking the USG).

¶6. (C) For the USG briefing on the FOL itself, the U.S. officials asked that cameras and recording devices not be allowed. We explained that the alternative would be for the USG to provide access to the FOL, but the Ecuadorian Air Force would have to conduct the tour and answer any questions. After some discussion, the legislators agreed to

leave cameras and recording devices outside. FOL commander Lt. Col. Jared Curtis's presentation reinforced many points the Ecuadorian military had made. In response to questions, Defense Attache COL Michael Schodowski and Political Counselor Nan Fife stated that the USG was willing to cooperate, but that requests on specific alleged incidents be submitted through the Foreign Ministry.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: While claiming that the local population was unhappy about the FOL's presence, sub-commission president Martinez acknowledged that they did not find problems with abandoned children and said that his group would focus primarily on the (alleged) U.S. role in sinking fishing boats. The legislators' visit to the FOL ran much shorter than their session with the Ecuadorian military, likely a result of our refusal to allow them to posture for the cameras and our insistence on receiving queries about specific incidents via diplomatic note. The Embassy will respond to any diplomatic notes received in coordination with Washington and SouthCom.

HODGES

=====CABLE ENDS=====